

## BOSTON- BAND COLD CHOCOLATE BRINGS FOLK, FUNK AND BLUEGRASS BLEND TO HENNIKER



On July 12, the town of Henniker is excited to bring Cold Chocolate, a genre-bending Americana band that fuses folk, funk, and bluegrass to create a unique sound all their own to the Angela Robinson Bandstand. Featuring Ethan Robbins on guitar, Ariel Bernstein on percussion, and backed by some of the root music scene's finest players, this group from Boston is impressing audiences throughout New England and beyond. Punctuated by tight harmonies and skillful musicianship, and with a focus on songwriting, Cold Chocolate has quickly gained recognition for their original music and high-energy shows. The band has shared bills with Leftover Salmon and David Grisman, and regularly performs at venues and music festivals up and down the East Coast.

Robbins began his bluegrass career at Oberlin College, where he started to explore how this hard-driving fast-paced genre could be stretched. A classical violinist from age four, he fell in love with the guitar when he turned fourteen and his father bought him five quintessential albums: The Band's *Music from Big Pink*, Bob Dylan's *Bringing it all Back Home*, John Hartford's *Steam Powered Aero-plane*, Hank Williams *Live at the Grand Ole Opry*, and the Grateful Dead's *Workingman's Dead*. Ever since, Robbins has attempted to bring those raw, rootsy sounds into his own original material.

In 2012, Robbins met percussionist Bernstein at a mutual friend's gig in Boston. Like Robbins, Bernstein studied classical percussion in college before moving to the drum set. A master of restraint, the loose-wristed Bernstein brings a light and tasteful groove to Cold Chocolate's tunes, filling out their sound and heightening the band's live energy. In addition to playing in Cold Chocolate, Bernstein can often be found as a sideman in The Ballroom Thieves, as well as at Dimension Sound Studios in Jamaica Plain, working on the records of many of the scene's finest acoustic musicians, including Josh Ritter, Darlingside, and Mr. Sun.

As for the band's intriguing name and the story behind it, "it came from a childhood memory of mine," says Robbins. "When my brothers and I used to visit my Grandfather in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, the whole drive there from D.C. we'd be in the backseat talking about the frozen Milky Way bars that awaited us in his freezer. I still remember pulling into his driveway after a six-hour drive. He'd come out to meet us—arms wide open for a hug—and the three of us would shoot right past him, headed straight for the freezer, where awaited us the King Size Milky Way Bars. So, in some ways, I dedicate the band name to my Grandfather's memory."

The Henniker Summer Music Series is sponsored by the town of Henniker. All concerts are free (although donations to the Concert Committee - Town of Henniker are welcome), begin at 6:30 PM and take place at the Angela Robinson Bandstand at Community Park, Main Street. Should there be inclement weather on Tuesday evening for Cold Chocolate, the concert will take place in the Community Center, adjacent to the park. Check our facebook page <https://facebook.com/HennikerConcert> for the latest information.

Bring a chair, spread a blanket, visit a local restaurant or have a picnic supper on the lawn and join your neighbors and friends in this community-building event at our bandstand. The complete summer schedule and weekly weather updates are available on the Town of Henniker website: [www: henniker.org](http://www.henniker.org) and on our facebook page.

We continue to follow current best practices from the CDC as we plan for an exciting and safe summer series. We ask you to use your own judgment in deciding whether or not to wear masks and/or to socially distance. Please, if you or a family member has COVID symptoms or has tested positive, please remain at home.